ment at the beginning of the year, there were in all 15 reserves in respect of which claims had to be enquired into by the Forest Settlement Officers, out of which one was cancelled and two were completed during the year. The remaining 12 were pending settlement at the close of the year. The progress was unsatisfactory. The Peishkars have been asked to devote greater attention than they had been hitherto doing to this important work and to bring it to an early completion. Of the 13 reserves which had been settled in 1082, 6 were finally gazetted under Section 18, four were pending with the Reserve Settlement Officer for revision of boundaries, two with the High Court on appeal, and one with the Forest Settlement Officer, Trivandrum, for the acquisition of claims. The Acting Conservator has made the following observations in regard to the forest settlement work: "the blocks were not demarcated, before settlement enquiry began, as Forest Settlement Officers did not perambulate or inspect the boundaries and claims before passing their decisions, and this has resulted in many existing claims escaping settlement and in new claims arising by the subsequent registration of lands. Unless these defects are remedied, it is hopeless to expect the correct and efficient settlement of claims in reserves." His Highness' Government have informed the Peishkars that they view this state of affairs with grave disapproval and that they insist on the rules dated 28th August 1903, laying down the procedure to be adopted by Forest Settlement Officers, being strictly followed. The Conservator has been asked to submit proposals for revising the rules, should he find them defective in operation.

***25. Fuel and fodder reserves.***—Out of the existing fuel and fodder areas, 8 were notified for reservation, but one of these was subsequently cancelled. The progress made cannot be considered satisfactory. The Acting Conservator has been asked to expedite the reservation of the remaining tracts intended for fuel and fodder purposes.

***26. Demarcation and survey.***—74 miles of permanent reserve boundaries were cut and 356 miles of existing boundaries were re-cleared during the year, at a cost of Rs. 22·8 and Rs. 10·6 per mile. His Highness' Government have informed the Acting Conservator that they concur in his observations regarding the necessity for the preliminary demarcation of reserved lands under settlement and the permanent demarcation of reserved forests and of enclosures within them, and that they look to him to give effect to his views. No survey work of any importance was undertaken during the year.

***27. Working plans.***—The scheme for the preparation of working plans, on a rotation of 20 years, introduced from the beginning of 1082, in all the divisions except the Southern, was followed during the year. The Acting Conservator has brought to notice that, as the annual coupes had not been fixed with reference to the crop standing and its capability to yield the out-turn expected as per contracts entered into for the supply of timber from the coupes, much valuable timber such as teak and blackwood might have been overcut, and that, unless further exploitation of such species was stopped till a rough valuation survey in each of the working circles had been made, there was the danger of bringing about a total extinction of those species of valuable timber. Steps are being taken to explore the working circles and to determine their capability in respect of the more valuable species before further fellings are allowed. During the year under review, one coupe in each of the

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly